STAR WARS™

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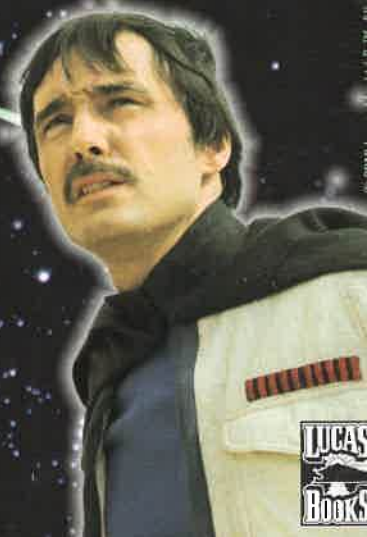
52

T-16 SKYHOPPER

Tatooine hotshot's airspeeder

Ithorian 'Hammerheads'

Admiral Motti



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LUCAS BOOKS

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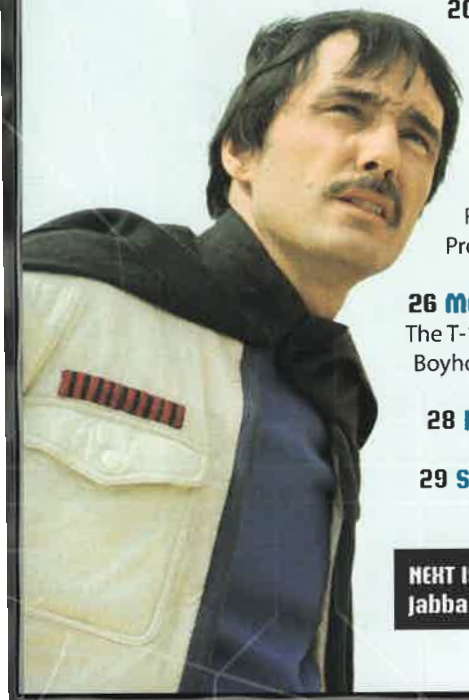

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Jabba the Hutt's Skiff

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STAR WARS

"I WAS SO CLOSE I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO FRY MY INSTRUMENTS. AS IT WAS, I BUSTED UP MY SKYHOPPER PRETTY BAD.

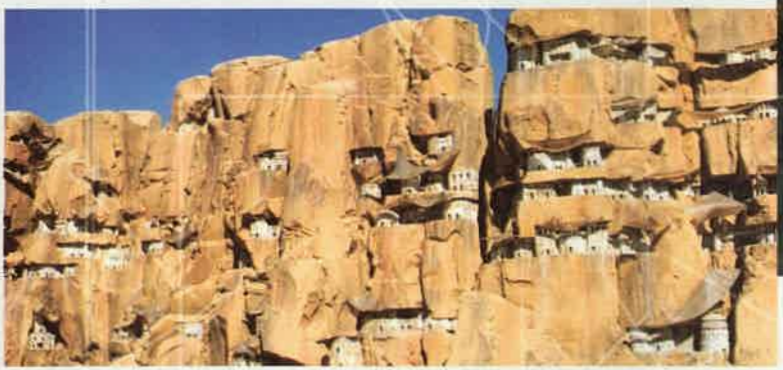
LUKE SKYWALKER

The most unassuming of craft, the T-16 Skyhopper was seen on many planets throughout the galaxy. Especially popular with bored teenagers in the Outer Rim systems, there's a solid argument for the Skyhopper being responsible for training some of the best starfighter pilots in the Rebel Alliance in their vital formative years, and therefore for saving the galaxy from the Empire.

THE T-16 SKYHOPPER

THE PERFECT TRAINING

Incom's light airspeeder, the T-16 Skyhopper, was one of the more common repulsorlift vehicles in the galaxy, found almost everywhere. Loved by young racers, it was also used by security services, courier companies and even by taxi and light transport operations. However, the legacy of the T-16 was an entire generation of starfighter pilots.



Unlike the earlier two-being T-13 airspeeder, Incom's next significant entry into the light airspeeder market was to redefine the whole market sector. While it was fast enough to attract favourable attention from the amateur racing crowd, the T-13 had an open cockpit arrangement and was unable to carry enough cargo or mount enough hard points to appeal to those looking for a more utilitarian vehicle. The T-16 was a very different kind of craft.

Up And Away!

Instantly recognisable from its trefoil design – one that would be extensively copied thereafter by many other manufacturers for a variety of craft – the Skyhopper stood 12 metres high, 10.4 metres long and just under 12 metres wide. The cockpit was split in two, with neither pilot nor gunner/passenger having a full field of view. However, both had access to simple but precise displays and holo-mapping

systems that ensured that the obscured view was never an issue. This was just as well, as even an unmodified T-16 had a top speed of an eye-watering 1200km/h, with beautifully instinctive controls adding what many considered to be dangerous manoeuvrability to the mix. The maximum altitude of 300km gave a clue as to the chosen name of the vehicle. The sealed, pressurised cockpit meant that a pilot could hop into the upper atmosphere of a planet, hit maximum speed without too many collision worries, then drop back down to the ground and their destination.

Starfighter Dreams

While the Incom E-16/x ion engine gave the T-16 Skyhopper its speed, it was the then-advanced system of gyrostabilisers and their control integration with two DCJ-45 repulsorlift generators that gave the Skyhopper its manoeuvrability. Many a young pilot skipped along the upper atmosphere of their world, or threaded their way through canyons real or artificial, dreaming of being a starfighter pilot. Little did early Skyhopper owners know that the simple and elegant controls of the T-16 would later form the basis for those of the legendary X-wing starfighter; the saviour of the Rebel Alliance and the galaxy.

THREADING THE NEEDLE

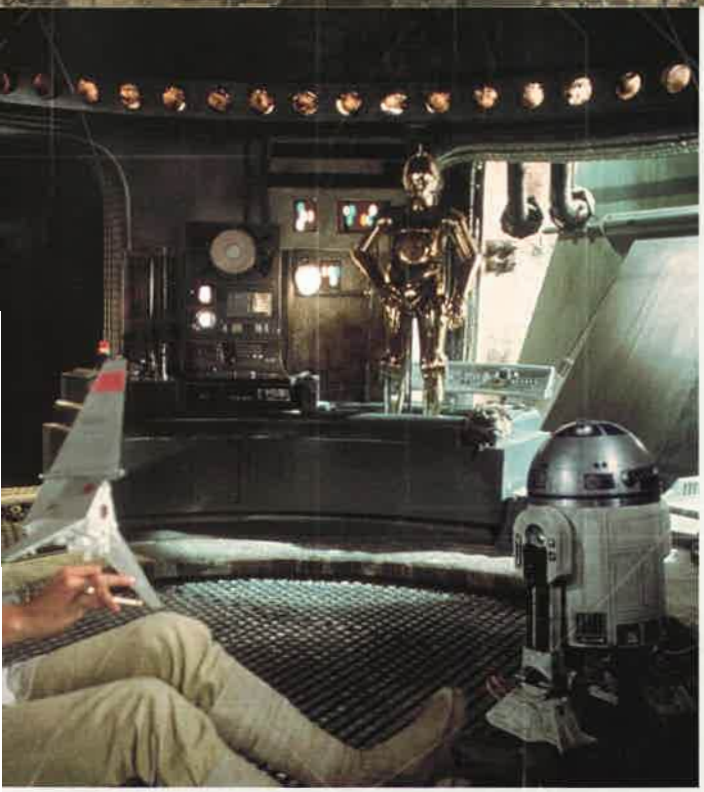
LUKE SKYWALKER AND THE T-16

Able to carry a cargo payload of 50kg and carry a passenger as well as its pilot, the T-16 was cheap enough and functional enough to allow a young Luke Skywalker to convince his Uncle Owen not to get rid of the T-16 that Cliegg Lars had bought many years before.

The old Lars Skyhopper became Luke Skywalker's escape from the drudgery of his existence. He wasn't the only one – Luke's friends, and many like them across the galaxy, used the freedom afforded by the speedy craft to dream of other lives or to just blow off steam. Luke's Skyhopper was one of those fitted with a light laser cannon, allowing him to 'bull's-eye' womp rats during canyon runs with his friends.

Beggar's Canyon

Formed thousands of years earlier, back when Tatooine still had rivers, Beggar's Canyon was a narrow, twisting pilot's dream. Though there were many canyons in the area, the challenge afforded



by Beggar's drew bush pilots from all across Tatooine, whether they flew podracers, landspeeders or Skyhoppers. The area was home to womp rats and to a highly dangerous canyon krayt dragon. The latter rarely showed itself – though Obi-Wan Kenobi once had to rescue a young Luke and his friend Windy from it after Luke crashed the T-16. Womp rats had been the quarry on that occasion, and the aggressive omnivores were a regular target for the youths of Anchorhead and elsewhere. Beggar's Canyon held one obstacle few pilots dared master – the Stone Needle. Flying at speed through the narrow opening at its top was a dangerous challenge that only Luke and his friend Biggs ever attempted successfully. Doing so brought high praise from their fellow T-16 pilots – and unknowingly gave them practice for far deadlier flights in the future.

Grounded by his uncle after losing his stabiliser threading the Needle in Beggar's Canyon, Luke was left with only a model of a T-16 to 'fly'.

BIGGS DARKLIGHTER

SHOOTING STAR

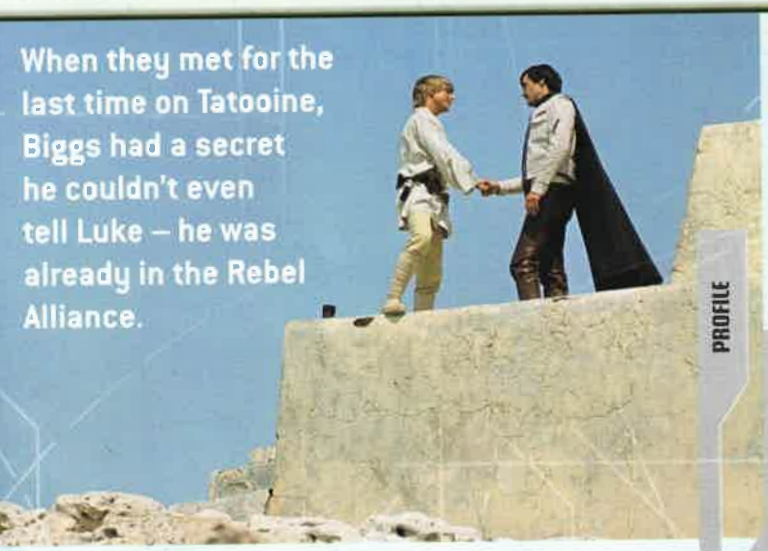
Luke Skywalker's childhood friend Biggs Darklighter never flew as part of Rogue Squadron. However, because of his selfless sacrifice at the Battle of Yavin and the help and advice he offered the likes of Wedge Antilles, Biggs was credited as one of the founders of the Rebellion's most famous squadron.

No one on Tatooine could ever have been said to have had an easy time of it. However, the Darklighter family came close. Biggs' father Huff was a successful if sometimes unscrupulous businessman who owned a large number of moisture farms. Huff's business success allowed Biggs as privileged an upbringing as was possible on Tatooine.

Lifelong Friendship

The Darklighter homestead was part of the Great Chott Salt Flat Community, near to the Jundland Wastes and the Western Dune Sea. Though his home was relatively close to the Lars moisture farm, Biggs first met Luke Skywalker in Anchorhead. Huff didn't discourage Biggs from mixing with the farmers' children – he just didn't go out of his way to encourage it. Nevertheless, the older Biggs and Luke became firm friends. Their base was Tosche Station; an installation on the outskirts of Anchorhead that held a reactor which provided power and fuel cells to many houses and farms in the area. The station was owned by Merl Tosche, though he rarely visited it . Laze 'Fixer' Loneozner actually ran the place, and he and his friends, Tank, Deak, Windy and Fixer's girlfriend Camie, formed a lose group of similarly aged 'kids' who hung around with Biggs and Luke. Though Fixer tried to usurp him from time to time, Biggs was the leader of the group. As a result, Luke took a lot of the flak that the others were too intimidated to aim at Biggs. However, Luke and Biggs were inseparable, helped by their abilities as mechanics and, most of all, pilots. Flying their T-16 Skyhoppers, the two were untouchable – each seeking to beat the other's achievements, to the horror of their relatives.

When they met for the last time on Tatooine, Biggs had a secret he couldn't even tell Luke – he was already in the Rebel Alliance.



PROFILE

Biggs Darklighter

Homeworld
Tatooine

Species
Human

Height
1.83m

Weapon
SE-14r light repeating blaster

Affiliation
Rebel Alliance

Childhood's End

It had long been Biggs' and Luke's dream to enrol in the Imperial Academy and, on graduation, to buy a starship and... well, that was as far as the detail went. What mattered was the promise of freedom and escape from Tatooine. In the end, freedom proved relative. Luke was kept on Tatooine by his uncle for one more season, while Biggs found the realities of the Imperial Naval Academy on Prefsbelt IV very different from what he had imagined. Rebel sympathies brought together Biggs and others, and only blind luck prevented Darklighter and his friend Derek 'Hobbie' Klivian from being caught and disappearing. Youthful enthusiasm was replaced by fear and cynicism, and concrete plans to join the Rebellion. After graduation, Hobbie and Biggs were assigned to the freighter *Rand Ecliptic*. With help from the captain, a deep-cover Rebel agent, the two staged a mutiny and fled to join the Alliance.

Rebel Ace

Biggs and Hobbie quickly became recognised as two of the best starfighter pilots in the Rebel

Did you know...?

A scene at Tosche Station, where Biggs makes one last visit to Tatooine, was filmed but never used. It can be seen in full on the CD-ROM '*Star Wars: Behind the Magic*'.

Alliance, though this meant the two were separated for the first time since the Academy. Biggs was key to a number of missions, including the transfer of a partial set of Death Star plans on a mission in the Cron Drift, and the liberation of a squadron of X-wing starfighters during the defection of all the Incom engineers on the X-wing project. During this time, Biggs became friends with the young Wedge Antilles – future leader of Rogue Squadron.

Before the Battle

Biggs had successfully kept his defection to the Rebellion a secret from family and friends. This secrecy was tested to near-breaking point during Biggs' last trip home to Tatooine. He met Luke at Tosche Station, telling his old friend that he was first-mate aboard the *Rand Ecliptic*. In private, he told Luke he was planning to defect to the Alliance, not wanting to endanger Luke by telling him the whole truth. The parting of the two friends was difficult for Biggs. Back with the Alliance, he was assigned as part of the fighter squadron protecting the main Rebel base on Yavin 4. As he scrambled to his X-wing ready to take the fight to the approaching Death Star, Biggs took the chance for a reunion he'd only dreamed of. Luke Skywalker had made it to the Rebellion, and would join Biggs on the assault. The meeting was a brief one, but it gave Biggs hope that the desperate attack on the Death Star might just be possible. In the end, Luke only had time to take the shot that destroyed the station because Biggs bought him time with his life.

Sacrificing his life to give Luke a chance to destroy the Death Star, Biggs Darklighter was killed by Darth Vader.

THE *TAYLANDER* SHUTTLE

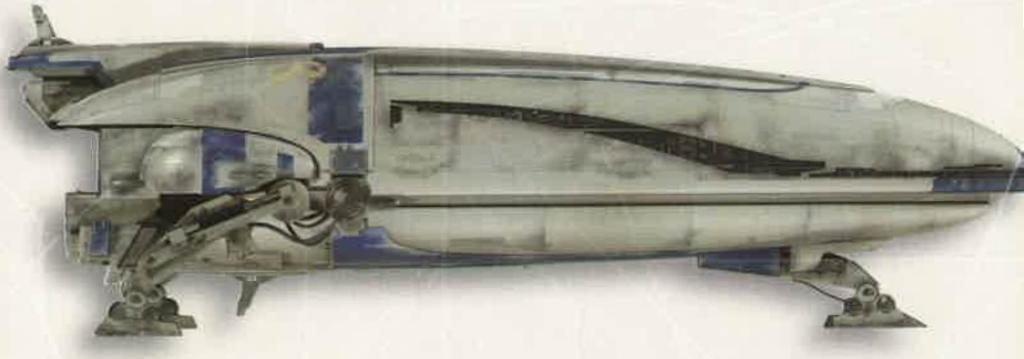
A COMMON SIGHT

One of the great challenges faced by companies making spacecraft was to crack the potentially profitable cheap-and-cheerful end of the market. While the Corellian Engineering Corporation did so with seeming ease, other companies struggled. SoroSuub eventually found some degree of success with the *Taylander* shuttle.

Taking a leaf from the 'design book' of the Corellian Engineering Corp., SoroSuub designed the *Taylander* shuttle range to be easily upgraded or modified from a range of kits. Furthermore, the shuttle offered a choice of three models at point of purchase. The first was a basic planetary shuttle, never intended to do more than carry passengers around their world or, at a push, to the nearest moon. The second model was an interplanetary version, bereft of a hyperdrive but able to make good time around the local system. The last version, and by far the most successful, carried passengers throughout the galaxy. All models were reliable and easily maintained.

Flowing Lines

The *Taylander* was just over 43 metres long, and featured the soft, flowing lines familiar in many SoroSuub designs – including the *Horizon*-class Star Yacht – and the pod-like shape of Flash and Gian speeders used on Naboo. In dock, the ship rested on three retractable legs. A standard feature of the line were the Boav ion drives. The inclusion of these engines, built into the superstructure at the rear of the ship, made it more likely that purchasers would have to settle for other SoroSuub systems, in order to make further upgrades easier to fit. The basic ships required just the one pilot in the small cockpit right at the nose. The configuration of the rest of the inside of the vessel was largely up to the purchaser. With the backing of the Commerce Guild, whom they heavily influenced at the end of the Old Republic, SoroSuub was able to market the *Taylander* heavily, making it a successful venture and quickly ensuring the cheap transports were seen all across the galaxy.



Taylander Shuttle PROFILE

Type
Transport shuttle

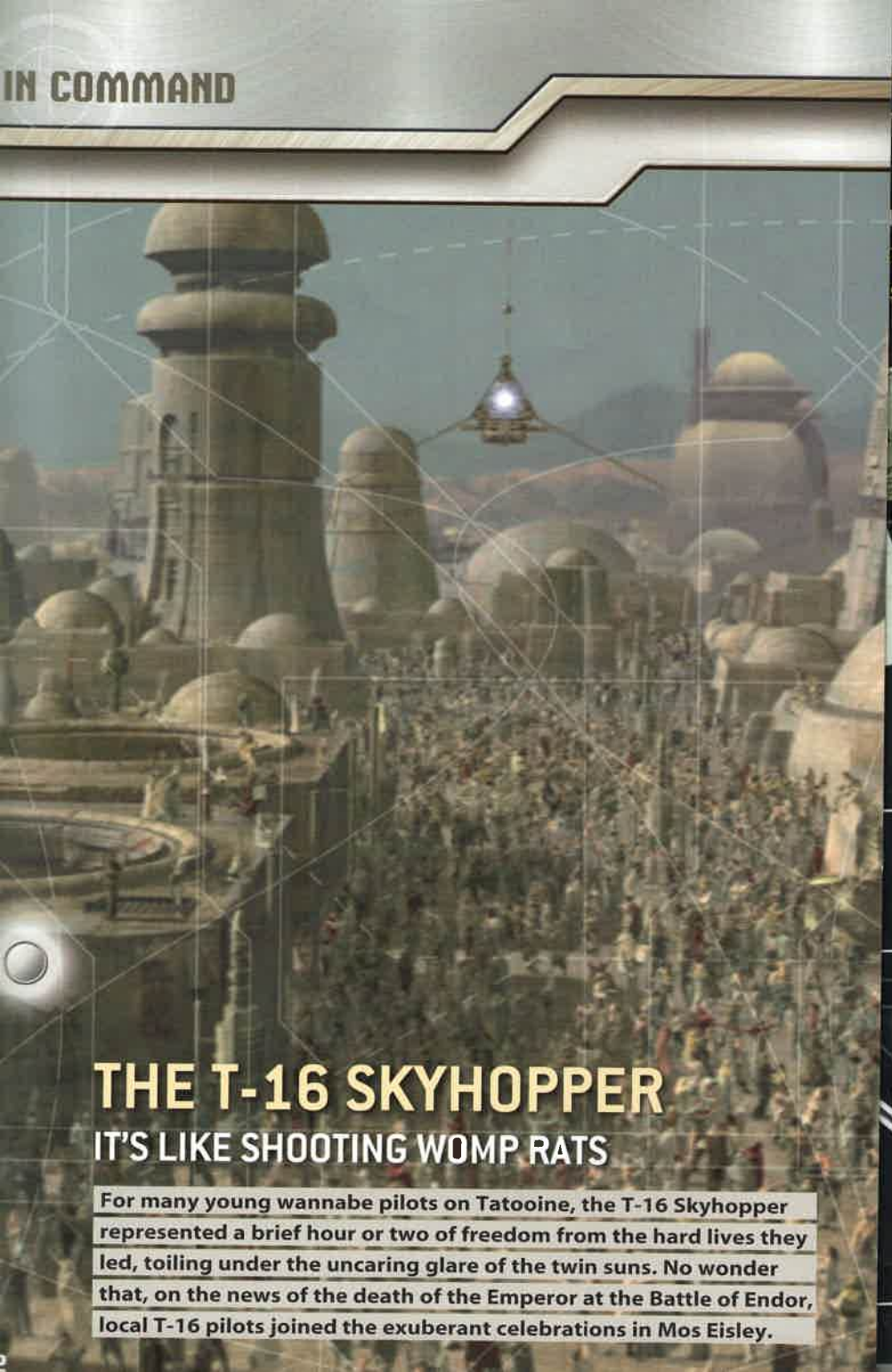
Manufacturer
SoroSuub Corporation

Length
43.5 metres

Weapons
None

Crew
1 pilot

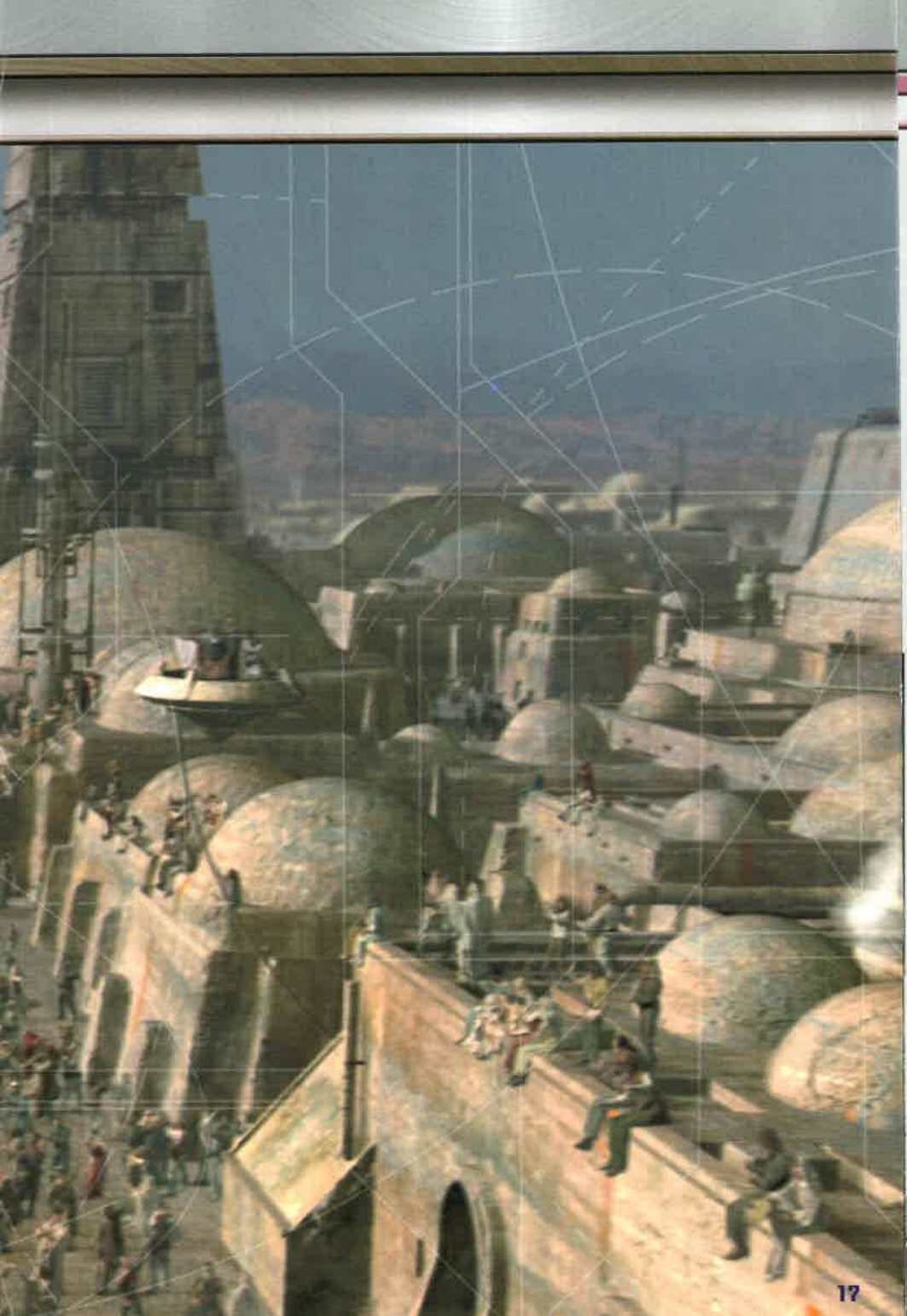
Affiliation
None



THE T-16 SKYHOPPER

IT'S LIKE SHOOTING WOMP RATS

For many young wannabe pilots on Tatooine, the T-16 Skyhopper represented a brief hour or two of freedom from the hard lives they led, toiling under the uncaring glare of the twin suns. No wonder that, on the news of the death of the Emperor at the Battle of Endor, local T-16 pilots joined the exuberant celebrations in Mos Eisley.



THE T-16 SKYHOPPER

Type
Repulsorlift airspeeder

Manufacturer
Incom Corporation

Size
12 metres high, 10.4 metres long and 11.6 metres wide

Maximum Speed
1200km/h

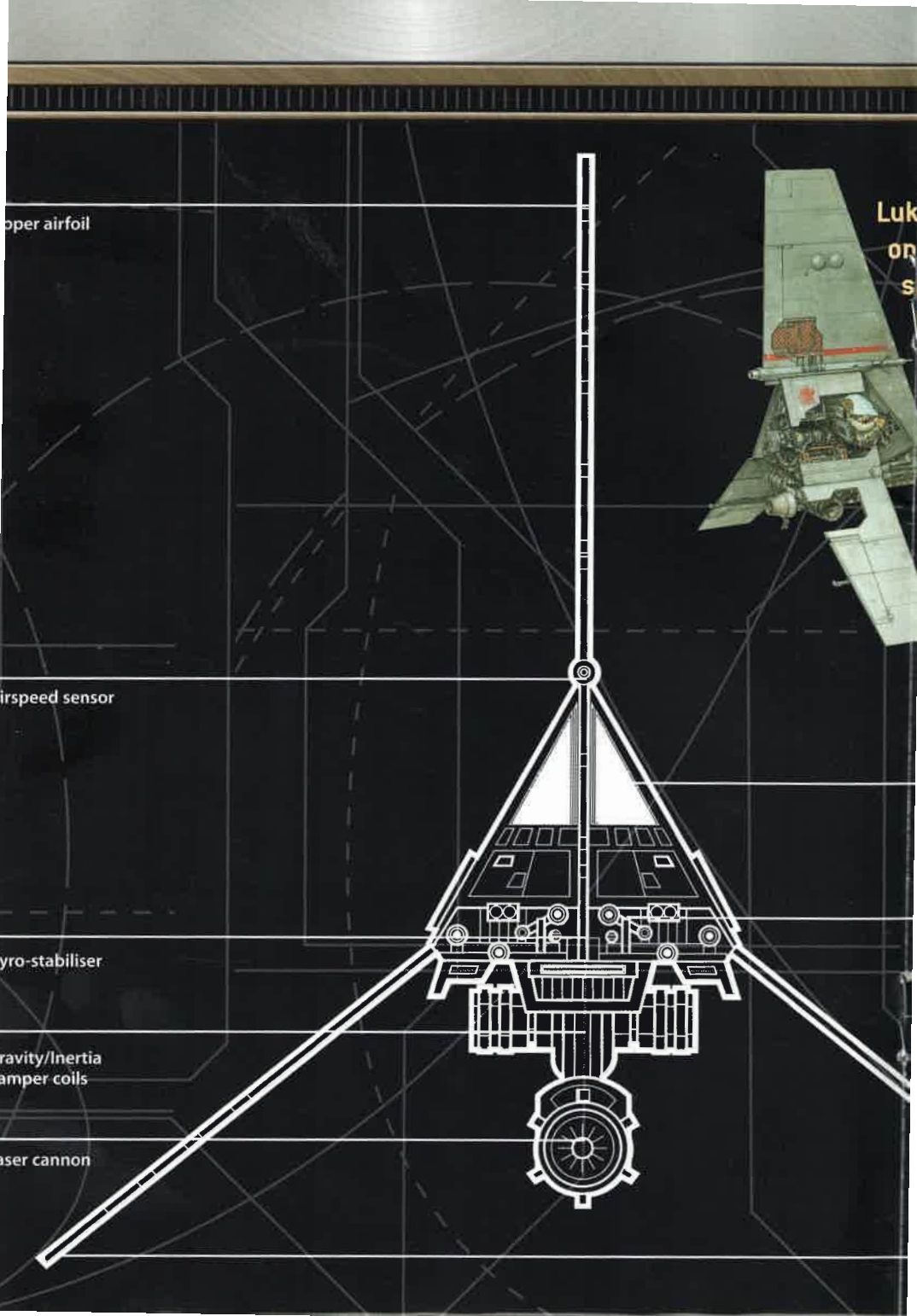
Maximum Altitude
300km

Engine
E-16/x ion engine, DCJ-45 repulsorlift generator

Weapons
Various, including pneumatic projectile cannon (standard civilian option), light repeating blaster, double laser cannon (standard planetary militia option)

Crew
1x pilot, 1x passenger/gunner

Affiliation
Various


oper airfoil
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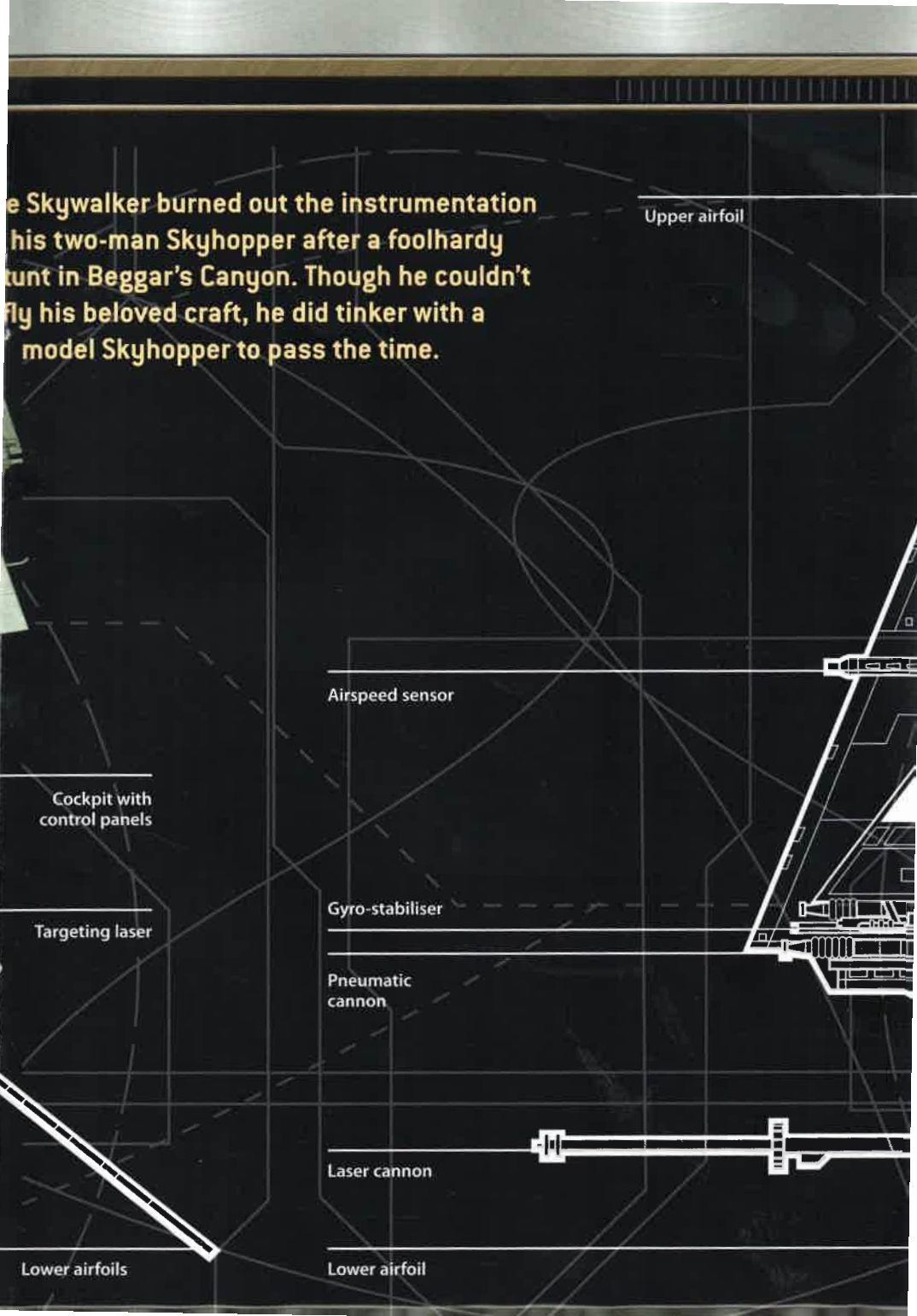
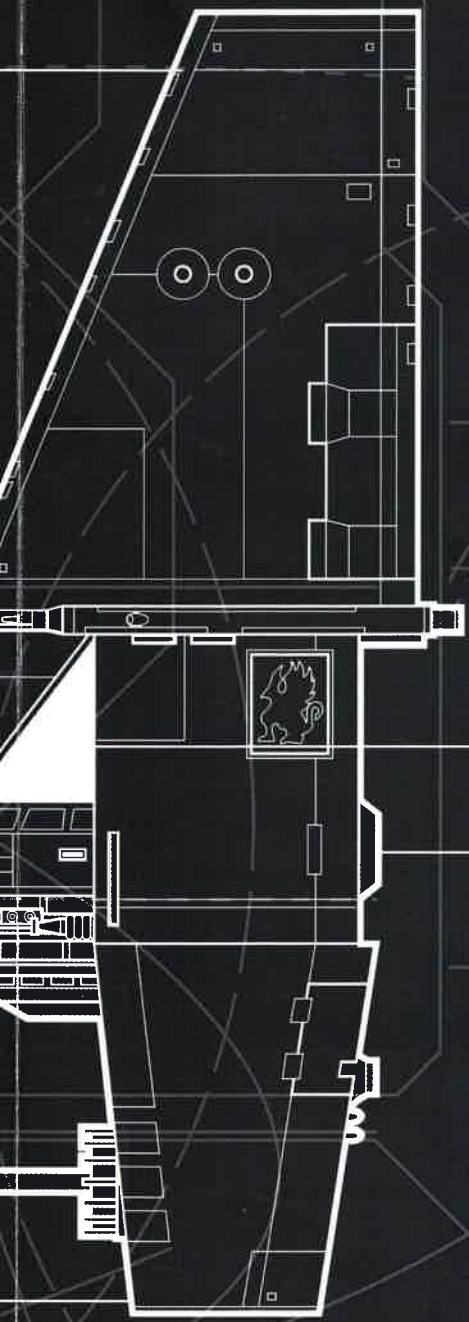
s

e Skywalker burned out the instrumentation
his two-man Skyhopper after a foolhardy
tunt in Beggar's Canyon. Though he couldn't
fly his beloved craft, he did tinker with a
model Skyhopper to pass the time.



Adaptable and versatile

The T-16 Skyhopper was not just popular with bush pilots. Used by the Rebel Alliance and many other organisations to train starfighter and bomber pilots, the Incom Corporation airspeeder was quickly adopted by a number of security forces and planetary militia across the galaxy. The hard points on the T-16 allowed more significant weaponry to be mounted, including an under-slung, stripped-down heavy laser cannon. Military versions of the craft generally had additional armour plating added to the hull.



ADMIRAL MOTTI

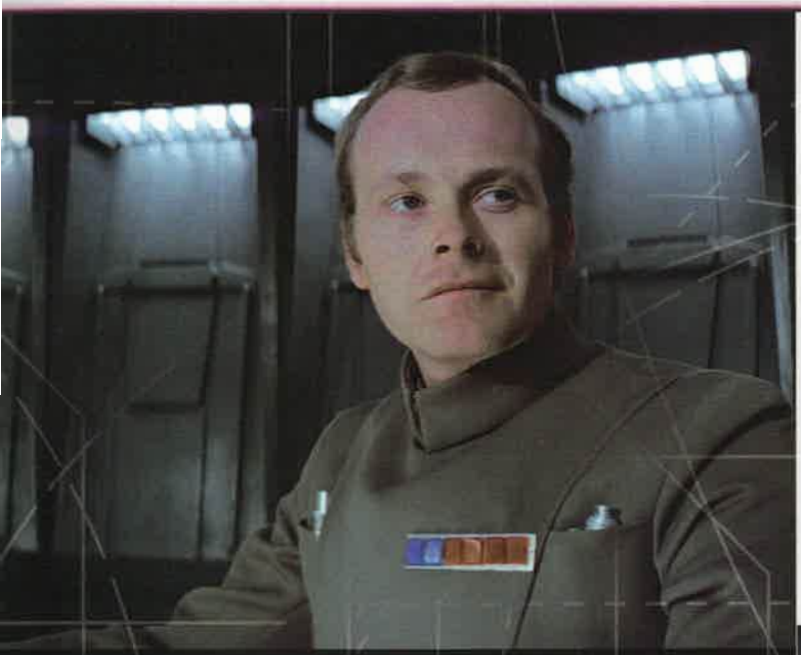
ALL TALK?

Arrogant, overconfident, under-qualified – Admiral Conan Antonio Motti was unfortunately typical of many high-ranking Imperial officers, even more than two decades after the rise of the Empire. His unshakeable faith in the Death Star was to prove his undoing.

Born to wealth and influence, with at least one family connection to Grand Moff Tarkin, Conan Antonio Motti is thought to have begun his naval career during the Old Republic. He certainly saw the Jedi in action during the Clone Wars, and their abrupt fall engendered a contempt in Motti for the fallacy of the Force. The Motti family connections saw Conan rise quickly through the ranks of the Imperial Navy. As a result, Motti had to pad out his résumé as he rose above other more experienced and qualified Imperial commanders.

Ion Storm to Death Star

Motti's early service to the Empire was aboard the *Ion Storm*, a *Strike*-class cruiser commanded by Captian Jaim Helaw, an officer who saw potential in the young man. That potential may well have been realised eventually through hard work, but Motti had no time for such concerns. He spent some time on Coruscant, building his own political, military and naval connections beyond those immediately afforded by the family. His rise from this point was meteoric, and he was soon an Admiral. Briefed on a new super-weapon project, Motti became one of the most vocal supporters of the Death Star Project, and was the Imperial Navy's coordinator aboard the station during its construction over the penal colony planet of Despayre. At the same time, he commanded the Star Destroyer *Steel Talon*, which was part of the fleet guarding the construction site. Once the station was complete, Admiral Motti became part of the command triumvirate, with General Tagge of the Imperial Army and Grand Moff Tarkin. As with all senior Imperials, Motti had his own plans and ambitions to rule the galaxy. These came to nought when the Death Star was destroyed at the Battle of Yavin with him aboard.



Technology and terror

Motti was supremely confident in the power of the Death Star – a power he felt he, not Tarkin, commanded. He encouraged and supported the Grand Moff, while plotting his downfall. Motti also sought the destruction of Darth Vader, of whom Motti was very afraid after Vader Force-choked him for insolence. Saved by Tarkin, Motti had certainly learned the power of the dark side.

PROFILE

Admiral Conan Motti

Species
Human

Height
1.7m

Vehicle
Death Star I

Weapon
Blaster pistol

Affiliation
Galactic Empire

THE ITHORIANS

PEACE, TRAGEDY, HOPE

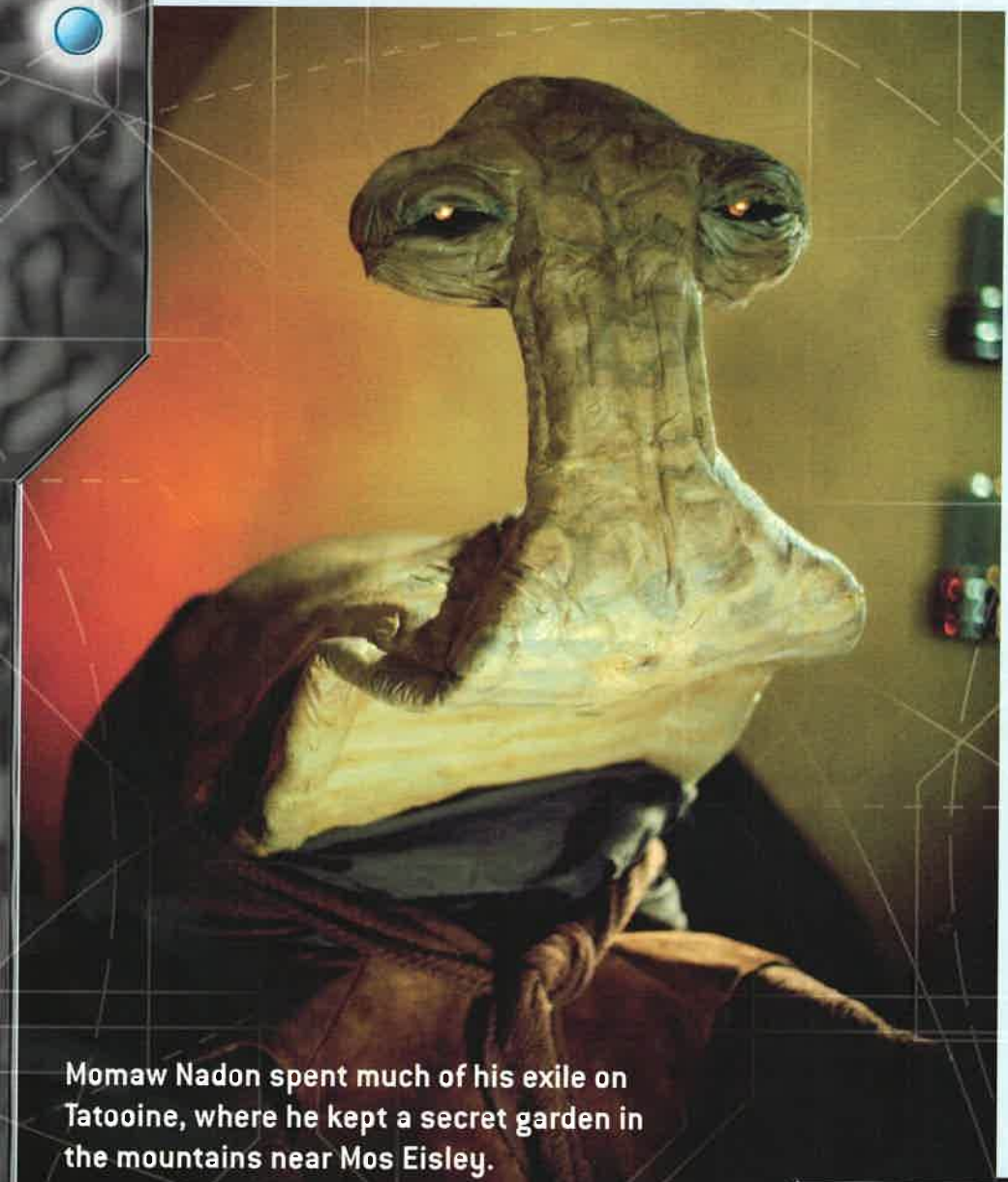
The Ithorians were a peaceful people, whose lives were dogged by violent tragedy that ultimately saw them lose their homeworld of Ithor and the Mother Jungle they worshipped. Though used to a nomadic lifestyle, the Ithorians mourned as they sought new worlds to settle.

The Ithorian people first came to the attention of the Republic 12,000 years before the Battle of Yavin. By that point, the species had already developed repulsorlift technology and lived in giant herdships that floated above the canopy of their precious Mother Jungle. The Ithorians had long believed that their planet's eco-system was sacred and had sworn to protect it even from themselves. With the development of the herdships, it became forbidden for any other than the Oracles, and those precious few others who heard the call of the Mother Jungle, to go to the surface of Ithor and return. Anyone else had to stay there unto death and become one with the environment.

PEACEFUL MAMMALS

Averaging two metres tall, Ithorians were mammals with thick, leathery skin. Bipedal, they had four widely spread, thick toes at the front and one wider toe at the back. Their four fingers and one thumb were long and slender. However, it was the shape of the Ithorians' heads that marked them out, and that gave them the cruel nickname of 'Hammerheads'. Their long necks led to a bumpy head with eyes to either side on stalks. Ithorians had two mouths, one on either side of the neck, and each opened to two throats. Though softly spoken in a unique stereophonic language, Ithorians could use their four throats and powerful lungs to release a powerful, resonant shout that could blast the ears of those nearby and cause actual physical damage.

Though great debaters, able to see both sides to any disagreement, many found the prosaic Ithorians rather boring.



Momaw Nadon spent much of his exile on Tatooine, where he kept a secret garden in the mountains near Mos Eisley.

The Law of Life

During his exile on Tatooine, Momaw Nadon was threatened by Alima – demoted now to lieutenant. Nadon was able to blame Alima for the escape of the *Millennium Falcon*. When Alima was shot by the Imperial Prefect, a shocked Nadon cloned him twice in accordance with the Ithorian Law of Life – for every plant destroyed in harvest, two must be planted to replace it.

Imperial compromise

Shortly before the Battle of Yavin, the Empire arrived at Ithor in force. The occupying fleet was led by Captain Alima, and he had come to take the Ithorians' exotic horticulture and agriculture to be used in bio weapons. The Ithorians were aghast, and unsure how to act. Alima threatened their forests with destruction. Still the Ithorian leaders were unable to act. In the end, one of their number, the high priest Momaw Nadon, gave the Empire the technology they sought in return for their leaving. Gloating, Captain Alima did so. Nadon was exiled, though he was forgiven many years later. However, the planet Ithor was to suffer irrevocable damage during the invasion of the extra-galactic Yuuzhan Vong. A pollen found only on Ithor was discovered to cause extreme reaction in the living armour that Vong warriors wore. To rid the galaxy of danger, the Yuuzhan Vong poisoned the planet, destroying all life on it. During a subsequent space battle, part of the Vong command ship crashed into the planet's altered atmosphere, igniting it instantly. Ithor burned. A decade later, 35 years after the Battle of Yavin, surviving Ithorians settled on Borao, hoping one day to return and reclaim their lost homeworld. Their herdships, escaping the Vong attack, carried seeds and cuttings that might one day recreate the lost Mother Jungle.

RICK MCCALLUM
PRODUCING A GALAXY

Rick McCallum was born in 1952 in Heidelberg, Germany, and is the stepson of British actor Michael York. His career as a producer began in television before moving to film. However, McCallum has always worked with, and been surrounded by, stellar talent.

McCallum began a long partnership with television playwright Dennis Potter on the BBC productions of *Pennies From Heaven* (1981), *The Singing Detective* (1986) and *Blackeyes* (1989), as well as Potter's film *Dreamchild* (1985). While filming *Dreamchild*, which later went on to win three BAFTAs, McCallum met George Lucas. The meeting clearly left an impression on Lucas because, while preparing his series *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, he brought McCallum in as producer.

Keeping Up With The Joneses

The adventures of the young Indiana Jones were by no means an easy introduction to working for George Lucas. The live-action series was shot all over the world – 35 countries in all – and was intended to have the same cinematic qualities that audiences had seen in Indy's big-screen adventures. McCallum brought together an unthinkably strong line-up of actors and writers, and worked with a string of phenomenal directors. These included Nicholas Roeg (with whom McCallum had worked before on two films), David Hare (another former colleague), Mike Newell, Deepa Mehta and *Monty Python* writer/actor/director Terry Jones. The series was a runaway success, and netted 11 Emmys, as well as 25 other nominations. McCallum returned to produce an incredible 94 documentaries for the 2007 release of the series on DVD.

The Galaxy Beckons

While Rick McCallum was chasing Indy around the world, George Lucas dropped a bombshell – he was planning a new *Star Wars* trilogy, feeling that film-making technology had finally caught up with Lucas' vision for the galaxy far, far away. The tester would be a reworking of the original *Star Wars* trilogy, to bring them closer to Lucas' original intent. McCallum produced

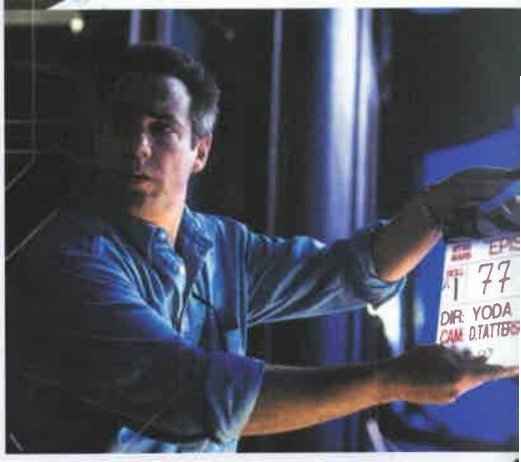
Rick McCallum on working with George Lucas

I think the reason that (George Lucas) gets along with the people who work well with him – not just me – is that he knows that if he asks you to do something, you will use and exhaust every possibility within the limits of your imagination to make it happen.

the *Special Editions* of the Original Trilogy before embarking on the Prequel Trilogy. Once again, this was no simple three-film project. Lucas was intent on making his new *Star Wars* films using often unproven technology. Episode II would be the first feature length film to be entirely filmed, sound recorded and edited – not to mention projected and distributed – digitally.

Partnership

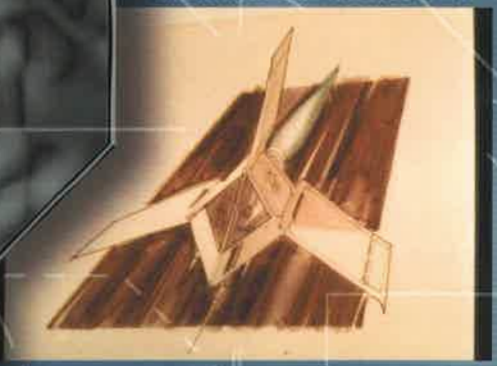
Currently in post-production (at time of writing) is the latest in the ongoing partnership between Rick McCallum and George Lucas – *Red Tails*, a series detailing the adventures of the WW2 African-American Tuskegee Airmen. George Lucas isn't done with Rick McCallum quite yet.



THE T-16 SKYHOPPER

BOYHOOD DREAMS

CREATING THE SKYHOPPER



1 Joe Johnston's concept sketch of the T-16. At the time, the script included Luke talking to his friend Biggs about his latest misadventures in his T-16.

2 The scene was dropped, but fans were intrigued by the back-story, which was still mentioned in the comic-book adaptation of Episode IV.

5 The model was the basis of a partly built prop of the Skyhopper visible in the background of the garage scene in Episode IV (and later Episode II).

6 Budget restrictions prevented Luke flying his Skyhopper in Episode IV. It first flew as a digital creation for the Special Edition of *Return of the Jedi*.

The T-16 Skyhopper, glimpsed in the background of the Lars' homestead garage and seen in full only as a model, was also mentioned in the legendary 'missing' Biggs scene included in the Marvel Comics adaptation of the film. *Star Wars* fans wanted more!

3 Colin Cantwell made the original production model of the Skyhopper, which is now preserved in the Lucasfilm archive.

4 Colin Cantwell's model measured 43cm x 17cm x 42cm and was fully detailed for filming, including the underside.

7 It was Colin Cantwell's model that actor Mark Hamill plays with in the garage scene when he expresses his frustration to C-3PO.

8 Skyhoppers have been a regular in *Star Wars* computer games, including all three *Rogue Squadron* games. Above: cockpit detail on the model.

1 Who are the man and woman standing behind Luke and Biggs?

2 Who was designated Red Three at the Battle of Yavin?

3 What is the much-disliked nick-name others give the Ithorians?

ANSWERS:

1. The people standing behind Luke and Biggs are Laze 'Fixer' Loneozner and his girlfriend Camie.

2. Biggs Darklighter was Red Three at the Battle of Yavin.

3. Ithorians were sometimes called 'Hammerheads' – a nickname they did not appreciate.

T

Thermal detonator

Weapon
Episode VI

Thermal detonators were prolific and destructive explosive devices used across the galaxy despite being restricted by law by every galactic government from the Old Republic to the New Republic and beyond. Inherently unstable, they were made from thermite or axidite containing varying amounts of explosive baradium. Activation saw a burst of energy cause the baradium to explode in a fusion reaction that released both incredible heat and concussive force. The damage radius depended on the size of the device, but the most widely used thermal detonators were grenade-like devices that were thrown at their targets, the timers set so that they hopefully couldn't be picked up and thrown back. These tended to have a blast radius of around five metres.

Commander Thire

Character
Expanded Universe

Born clone CC-4477, as a lieutenant, Thire went to Rugosa with Yoda to discuss an alliance with the Toydarians. He and two other clones helped defeat Separatist forces led by Asajj Ventress. On becoming commander, Thire led Palpatine's personal troops. Working with Armand Isard, future head of Imperial Intelligence services, he helped found the Homeworld Security Command. Thire and his troops eventually became the feared Imperial Coruscant Guard.

Grand Admiral Thrawn

Character
Expanded Universe

By the time the Chiss strategist Mitth'raw'nuruodo made his way into Imperial space, even the Emperor had heard of him. The Chiss commander had destroyed the Jedi's Outbound Flight project, then had dealings with Darth Sidious that saw him willingly exiled by his people. The blue-skinned, red eyed alien – now called Thrawn – rose through the ranks of the distinctly anti-alien Imperial Navy to become the only non-human Grand Admiral – uncomfortably recognised as the best strategist in the navy. Palpatine sent him on a top-secret mission in the Unknown Regions, where he remained beyond even the death of Palpatine at the Battle of Endor. On his return, Thrawn united many of the disparate remains of the Imperial forces and waged an almost-victorious campaign against the New Republic. He was killed by his bodyguard, a Noghri called Ruhk, at the Battle of Bilbringi – a very lucky escape for the New Republic.

Tipoca City

Location
Episode II

Capital city of Kamino, Tipoca stood on stilts that kept it above the waves that had long since drowned Kamino's surface. The seat of the Kaminoan government, it was also the site of a huge cloning facility that both created and trained the Grand Army of the Republic. During the Clone Wars, it was attacked by Separatist forces. A small team of Jedi worked with clone troopers, ARC troopers and the Kaminoans themselves to defend the city successfully.

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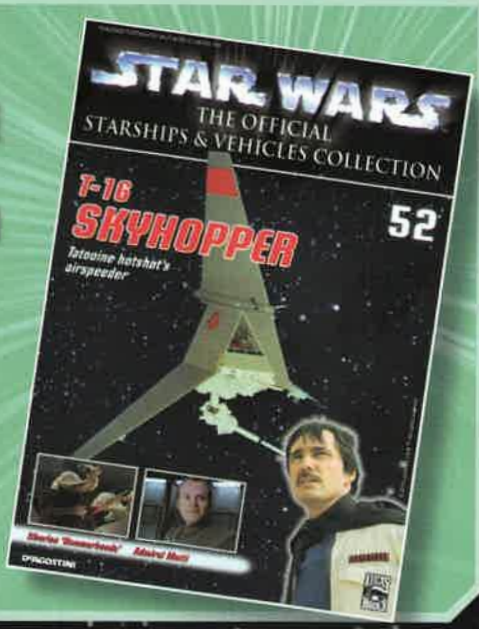

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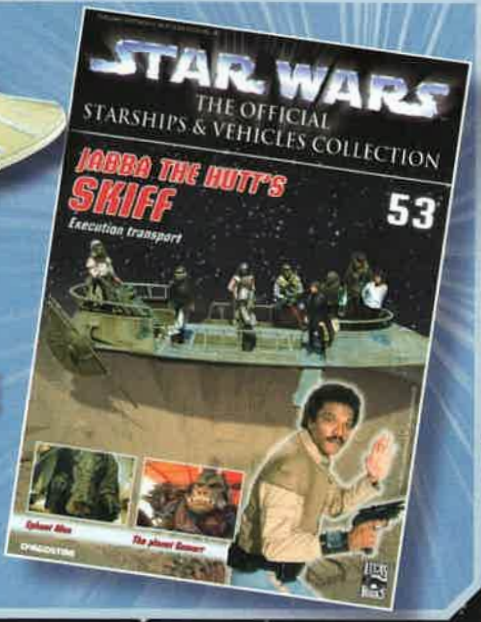

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